

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 OMB-01 AID-20 IO-12 RSR-01 /140 W

----- 070982

R 140455 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 159

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6328

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR PFOR PL HU VS PINS MILI

SUBJECT: ALLEGED SHOOTING INCIDENT INVOLVING HUNDEL IN BAO LOC

THE FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM NHA TRANG 13 APR 73

REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION AND INFO

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0392

REFS: A. SAIGON 6174 (REPEATING BUDAPEST 0881)

B. NHA TRANG 363, APRIL 5 SIT REP NOTAL)

1. BAO LOC INCIDENT APRIL 2 DESCRIBED PARAS 3 AND 4 REF A WAS SO TRIVIAL THAT POLOFF THERE INITALLY DID NOT CONSIDER IT WORTH REPORTING. WE REPORTED IT IN REF B, PARA 7, BECAUSE WE THOUGHT WORD MIGHT REACH SAIGON, BUT WE ARE FRANKLY ASTONISHED THAT IT MADE WAVES ON THE DANUBE.

2. BAO LOC POLOFF, WHEN QUERIED AFTER WE HAD LEARNED OF INCIDENT FROM POLOFF IN PHAN THIET, PROVIDED FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ON APRIL 5 (RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR INCLUSION IN REF B, WHICH WAS BASED ON APRIL 4 TELECON): " HAVE CHECKED SHOOTING INCIDENT WITH
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BOTH VIETNAMESE AND CANADIANS. NO RPT NO ATTEMPT MADE ON ANYONE'S LIFE. BULLET WHICH DENTED ICCS JEEP PARKED IN DRIVEWAY WAS OBVIOUSLY STRAY AND ALMOST SPENT. VIETNAMESE MAJOR PHU) ASSIGNED TO TWO-PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION SAID SHOT CAME FROM QUOTE UNDISCIPLINED PERSON FAR AWAY UNQUOTE. CANADIANS NOT UPSET OVER INCIDENT, BUT HUNGARIAN KELSKEMETI (PHONETIC), CURRENT CHAIRMAN OF BAO LOC TEAM, SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN IT PERSONALLY. TWO HUNGARIANS FROM PHAN THIET (ICCS REGION 4 HQ) CAME TO INVESTIGATE APRIL 3. I SAW REPORT SENT TO PHAN THIET BY KELSKEMETI AND, WHILE REPORT FACTUAL,

I CAN SEE WHERE SOMETHING COULD BE READ INTO IT."

3. BAO LOC CANDEL LATER THEORIZED TO POLOFF, ON BASIS APPARENT TRAJECTORY OF ROUND AND FACT THAT IT WAS ALMOST SPENT, THAT ROUND WAS ONE FROM WHICH SOME OF POWDER HAD BEEN REMOVED; THIS IS COMMON LOCAL PRACTICE WHEN TROOPS SHOOT AT BIRDS. CANDEL ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT ROUND STILL HAD SUFFICIENT FORCE TO HAVE WOUNDED ANYONE IT HAPPENED TO HIT; IT DID, IN FACT, DENT JEEP.

4. AS FOR ICCS COMMO FAILURE BETWEEN PHAN THIET AND BAO LOC, POLOFF UNDERSTANDS WHETHER ICCS REGION 4 ACTUALLY HELD "EMERGENCY" MEETING

OVER BAO LOC INCIDENT OR WHETHER REGIONAL HUNGDEL REQUESTED SAME, BUT WE KNOW THAT MATTER WAS DISCUSSED IN PHAN THIET IN ONE CONTEXT OR ANOTHER. ICCS COMPOUND IN BAO LOC IS NEAR TARGET RANGE, WHICH COULD EXPLAIN OTHER TWO SHOTS HUNGARIANS CLAIM TO HAVE HEARD.

5. BAO LOC POLOFF NOW ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN COPY OF ICCS TEAM'S REPORT TO PHAN THIET ON THE INCIDENT, WHICH WAS PRESUMABLY DRAFTED BY KELSKEMETI AND SIGNED BY HIM IN CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN FOR THE WEEK. IN ANY EVENT, INCIDENT HAS CLEARLY BECOME DISTORTED AND EXAGGERATED IN BUDAPEST VERSION; FOR EXAMPLE, ONLY ONE ROUND, NOT THREE, LANDED IN ICCS COMPOUND AND MAJOR PHU IS WITH TPJMC, NOT NATIONAL POLICE. TO CLASSIFY MATTER AS "DEPLORABLE INCIDENT" OR TO CONSIDER WITHDRAWAL OF BAO LOC HUNGDEL ON SECURITY GROUNDS IS ABSURD.

6. BELIEVE FOLLOWING POINTS COULD BE MADE IN REPLY TO GOH:

A) THERE IS, UNFORTUNATELY, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF UNDISCIPLINED FIRING IN VIET-NAM AS LOW-LEVEL TROOPS AND PEOPLE'S SELF-DEFENSE FORCE MEMBERS CLEAR THEIR WEAPONS, SHOOT AT BIRDS, ETC.; HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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NO ONE WITH EXPERIENCE HERE REGARDS SUCH PRACTICES AS MORE THAN A MINOR HAZARD.

B) GREATEST PERIL TO ICCS IN BAO LOC IS BOREDOM.

C) BAO LOC HUNGDEL, ALONG WITH POLDEL, REFUSED TO JOIN CANDEL AND INDODEL IN PRELIMINARY AND INFORMAL OBSERVATION OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CEASE- FIRE VIOLATION IN LAM DONG PROVINCE SINCE ICCS ARRIVED, ONE IN WHICH 15 CIVILIANS WERE WOUNDED MARCH 25 BY VC MORTAR

FIRE EVIDENTLY INTENDED FOR NEARBY REGIONAL FORCE OUTPOST (SAIGON 4963 AND 51 12, MARCH 26 AND 28 SIT REPS). FURTHERMORE, EAST EUROPEANS AT REGION 4 HQ TEAMED UP TO TRY TO REJECT CANDEL/ INDODEL REPORT ON THIS INCIDENT BECAUSE IT RESULTED FROM " UNAUTHORIZED" INVESTIGATION (SAIGON 5815, APRIL 6 SIT REP). HUNGDEL MIGHT CONSIDER PARTICIPATING OBJECTIVELY IN ICCS WORK INSTEAD OF TRYING TO MAKE MOUNTAINS OUT OF MOLEHILLS.

ENGLE UNQUOTE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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